8BIT

THE MAGAZINE FOR ALL 8·BIT COMPUTER USERS

NEW 8BIT

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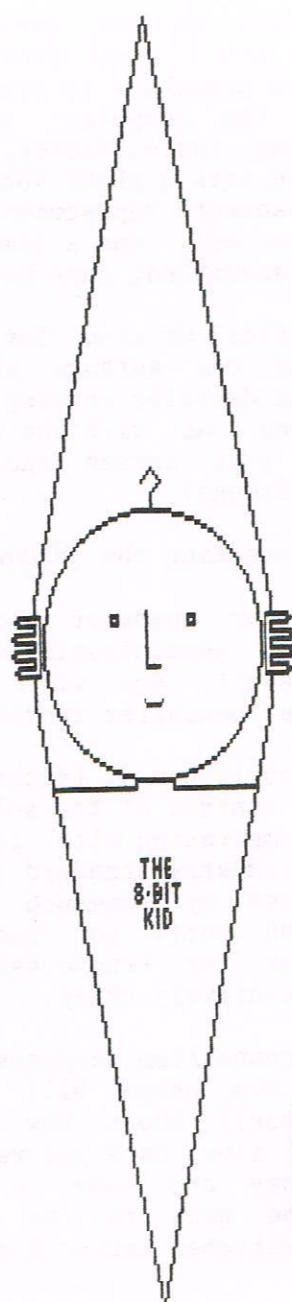
NO DANGER

COMMUNICATIONS (COMMS) THE EASY WAY - by Ed Harris, with interruptions by B Watson

Introduction: Ed Harris is the 'main man' of **Berkshire PCW Club**. Unsurprisingly, his computer is one of the PCW family and uses CP/M as the operating system from which the various comms programs need to be run. One version or another of CP/M is available for most 8-bit computers so Ed's experiences will have relevance for most 8-bit computer users who have ambitions to enter the world of computer communications (comms) via the phone network. But before the C64, Spectrum, SAM and Einstein (etc) users feel left out, this article sets out as clearly as I've seen the practical steps required to hitch any 8-bit computer to a phone line and use it.

In the interests of understanding the terms used, I suggest you read the enlarged glossary elsewhere in this issue. Over to you, Ed...

Okay, so you want to join the rest of (some of) us and chance your arm on-line, do you? And why not, it is certainly big enough, even though there are apparently some 30+ million using comms world-wide.

Anyone can buy the bits needed; we can assume you have a computer and a telephone line (BT, **Mercury Cable** etc - any provider will do). You will need a conveniently-sited phone socket and somewhere to plug in a mains plug - yes, sorry, *another* one to add to those for the computer, spare computer, monitor, printer, answerphone, fax machine, desk light, radio, heater, etc, etc. You can buy a modem with a telephone connection to plug into a phone socket (now would be a good time to buy a plug-in splitter or double-socket replacement box), a serial interface (if your computer does not already have one), and a comms software program suitable for your computer. But once these are assembled, just how easy is it to 'connect'?

I have to say that many articles written for the beginner fail miserably in delivering the goods. Too often do the authors skip over the initial, and most important, points. Many do not even describe setting up your comms software - a most essential part if ever there was one - as, with the wrong settings you would fail to connect and see those words up on your screen that convey so much; NO CARRIER, in telephone terms, you haven't got through!

So *very* first things first; connecting the hardware:

1) If you are not sure whether your computer has a serial interface, which is required to act as a translator when communicating with other computers, RTFM (read the flippin' manual). If it hasn't, you will need to buy one through an advertisement in 8BIT or one of the specialist fanzines for your computer.

2) You will need a modem - the actual box of tricks which handles the transmission and reception of signals under the control of the software. This should be described in its documentation (there *is* documentation with it, I hope?) as Hayes compatible, as this means it operates to the industry standard for such devices. Modems operate at different speeds, either described by somesuch code as V21/V23 or actual baud (transmission rate) such as 1200/800. Until you know what you're doing, I suggest you get a relatively slow one - look for transmission speeds at or under 1200 - an added bonus is that they will be relatively cheap.

For e-mail and bulletin board connection purposes it will get the job done, and you can save the extra amount of the phone bill incurred by its slower rate of operation by being strict with yourself about how long you spend on-line. You can always sell it on if it proves too slow once you really get into comms. There will be three connections to make and they are easy to identify; one goes to the mains via a conventional 3-pin plug, one goes to the serial interface (above) via a connector which is shaped like a flattened letter D to prevent incorrect connection,

and the third lead ends in a standard plug for a phone socket. You see; all quite different connectors.

3) The third component is the software, on tape or (better for reasons of speed and reliability) on disc, as appropriate to your computer. Whichever your computer, a recommendation from a satisfied existing user is worth reams of advertising puff by the supplier company. Try the computer-specific magazines for reviews too.

Personally, I have tried several different comms programs before I succeeded in getting things right. You may be lucky and get on-line at your very first attempt. For me, though, the public domain programs, while being free, failed to help me due to their complete lack of documentation.

I need coaxing at the onset of any venture. I need to have things explained in the clearest and simplest of terms. If I need to do X things Y number of times, then I need to be shown this and not fobbed of with 'plug it in, adjust it a bit, and you're away' Almost inevitably I am *not* away, except to bed filled with frustration and despair.

My first comms package was MEX, a PD offering which is still used by many. I could not get within two digits of phoning out with it because of the lack of documentation. I struggled, adjusted, re-aligned and frantically pressed all the keys in front of me. All to no avail as I failed miserably to connect to anything. It is in these early stages of anything new that you need all the success and encouragement you can get. So for me, MEX proved to be a big failure.

After several attempts over a three week period I admitted defeat and was persuaded by one of my super intelligent computer-buff friends to try another PD offering. QTERM arrived on my desk and I eagerly loaded it in.

The README files were written in the usual mixture of Swahili and termoblurb that managed to turn me off after the first paragraph. I remember moaning out loud as I flicked through the disc-based text and, right at that point, knew that I was on to another loser. But I didn't give up; I persevered for another three weeks.

I actually connected to **Electronic Yellow Pages** twice but had to switch everything off as I couldn't disconnect my phone in any other way. I contacted a bulletin board and almost succeeded in crashing the whole system as I doggedly tried to re-dial time after time. In the end the friendly sysop phoned me up and tactfully suggested I invest in another system!

Frustration was well and truly set in now, especially when I read in the magazines of new arrivals connecting first time (liars, I thought, *no-one* does it *first* time!)

I eventually steeled myself and shelled out £60 for a commercial program. COMM+, from **Margolis and Co**, is an excellent piece of software. Using it, I not only correctly set all of the parameters needed, but I successfully connected to a bulletin board (the one I had nearly crashed several weeks earlier) first time.

One of the advantages of COMM+ is that it is designed for many different computer systems and configurations so can be transferred to any other system that you might purchase in the future, so you won't have to learn a whole new procedure.

I admit I did have a few teething problems, but these were of my own making as I failed to read the manual properly - all 200+ pages of it!

COMM+ is simplicity itself to install. Setting the parameters for the bulletin boards is so easy. Most run at "8" "none" "even" and COMM+ allows you to set these

with ease. You do not need any complicated phone number files either as all of your BBS (or whatever) phone numbers are displayed on the screen for you; you merely have to select a number and it automatically dials the number for you, re-trying it three times automatically for you if it is engaged.

COMM+ comes with a ready-made front end that makes setting up a matter of minutes rather than hours. Please read through the essential parts of the manual first as it explains everything fully. You can create your own files and tailor them to your needs. Things such as log-on, log-off and log-off scripts etc can all be made, though you certainly don't need these to operate a successful system. I don't use them myself.

On my system (PCW, remember) it is simply a matter of unpacking the disc, booting up the system with a copy of the CP/M disc, replacing it with a copy of the COMMS+ disc, typing COMM <ENTER/RETURN> and away it goes, giving you on-screen help and prompts at every turn.

You can disable the front end on COMM+ and run the system manually, entering your own instructions, scripts etc as you need. I use it as it is, however, as it is simplicity itself to use with it.

Now what? Apart from making sure it all works as it should (check your phone still has its normal dialling tone) you start to set up your phone list. With COMM+ this is an easy to set up function. You select option 1, press <ENTER/RETURN>, and type in the name of your chosen BBS (note: a list of BBS of interest to 8-bit computer users and the required data will be published in the next issue of **8BIT**, once I have finished collating it - BW). After adding as many of these names as you like, you can then set about filling in the details.

For example, let us say that you have entered the name LENTIL BBS and it is on your list as entry number 6. Press "6" and <ENTER/RETURN> and you will be asked if you want to fill in details of the BBS. Press "Y" and select "8" - this is for ANSI emulation. If this is all starting to be gobbledegook to you, just do it and trust me!

You *could* press "1" for VIEWDATA emulation or "3" for SCROLLING. Most systems support ANSI, so I suggest you press "8" unless you have been told otherwise. By pressing <ENTER/RETURN> you will be taken to the next menu.

Choose "8" again for 8 bits, followed by "none".

At the next option (speed), choose whichever baud rate (transmission speed) is appropriate for *your* modem and computer. Just because a modern modem can shift data down the line at 28800 bits per second, it doesn't mean your computer can cope with that speed. Here I chose option 3 (2400), as my modem has this as its maximum. You could quite easily choose 1 (300), or 2 (1200) as you will be able to connect to many systems, even at these relatively slow rates. Though many BBS can handle a faster connection, slow is the way to go at first for the best chance for success.

I miss the next section out (modem set up with) and go straight to the Phone Number Selection. Here, for LENTIL, type in T (prefix all your phone numbers with this if your system supports the industry-standard Hayes Compatibility as this allows fast auto-dialling). After T type in the phone number without any breaks. In this case it would look like T01734662013. After this press <ENTER/RETURN> to the bottom and "Y" when prompted to save the entry when prompted. That's all there is to it.

Now you can repeat this process with all your other chosen names until you have a complete telephone index of systems, adding others as required. As time

progresses, you may feel like filling in the automatic log-on codes (the manual explains this fully). For now though you can ignore this as it is not needed to get you on-line.

Right, you are all fired up and ready to go. Press the code number of the BBS you want to connect to. When the options come up press "1" and you will see the checking process being carried out, finishing with your telephone actually phoning the BBS. If it is not engaged (and it very well could be) you will be informed that you are CONNECTED (at last!) and awaiting log-on. On some systems you may have to press your <STOP/ESC> key twice now to tell the BBS system that it is a human connection rather than another machine. You then follow the log-in prompts. You may be asked for your USER NAME all in one go or your FIRST NAME, then your LAST NAME.

Here it always pays to enter your *real* name. You may then be offered the whole name back to confirm it is correct.

After this you will probably be asked to choose a password, to ensure that in your later connections you are really you and that confidentiality can be preserved. Pick one you can easily remember, but do still write it down somewhere sensible. You will not see it being written to the screen; there will be a row of asterisks instead for security reasons. You may be asked to repeat it, and/or some additional personal information, in case a check of verification is needed later.

Upon a successful connection to LENTIL, you will be issued with an e-mail address; mine is:

sirius@lentil.demon.co.uk

Sirius is my business name (you *cannot* be sirius - J McEnroe), I also have another e-mail address (ed@lentil) for purely personal mail. It might be as well to check with the sysop first if the password or any part of this information will automatically be used as the first part of your e-mail address and choose what it is to be accordingly.

Incidentally, the e-mail address breaks down as follows:

1) sirius   <the individual addressee; within reason one can have any number of these per 'house' to group related e-mails>

2) @   <meaning, and said as, 'at'>

3) lentil.   <unique name of your electronic 'house'. In this case it is actually a bulletin board operator, or sysop>

4) demon.   <the 'Internet' service provider the sysop uses>

5) co.   <the type of establishment the service provider is; co = company, uni = university, for example>

6) uk   <the country where the service provider is, only us (United States) is *not* used as they invented the Internet system. Its their revenge for the UK not using the country names on its stamps because we invented the postal service. Sounds like sour grapes to me>

So now you know.

You can change your e-mail name, the LENTIL sysop Robert Lister is very helpful, especially to newcomers, but it will be more helpful to your contacts and consistent to keep a name once you've decided on it. If you are stuck, page him. You will see a

message RINGY-DING on your screen. If he is there he will answer. If not, you will be returned to the menu once again. Try again later. If words start appearing on your screen at any time you are connected to a BBS, it will probably be the sysop offering you help, so don't pull the plug.

Once you are connected you may find it something of an anti-climax when 'plugged in' to a local bulletin board. You were promised the world and yet here you are ferreting around a few files, many of which you may not understand, and many more you do not need. Where are all the people? You were told that countless millions (almost) awaited you out there with facts and information. And so they are, my friend, but you need to be able to contact the Internet proper to pull them in. Whether it be through Chic, Fidonet, Usenet, Demon or whoever, there are different systems on BBS through which you can make contact with any person or organisation in the UK or abroad (as long as they have provision to receive and send them) without difficulty just by leaving a message for the sysop to forward.

However, for the full all-singing, all dancing, World Wide Web, mouse and graphics, type of telecommunications, you will need to fork out some hard-earned cash and buy a computer which can handle it. You know, a MAC or PC is what we're talking about.

For those of us with more modest machines (and that's all 8-bit computers) who cannot access full graphics, a text-based system is required. Look for a SHELL ACCESS or TERMINAL or UNIX access in the provider's description. Incidentally, Compuserve would not be a good choice here. For a text-based system, a far better provider would be Cix, who do cater for you.

Most big companies will have a local-to-you telephone access point (called a node) so that all your phone log-ins will be charged at local rate, even those long distance calls to Australia and America (just 1p a minute at weekends by BT at present, even before you start allowing for such things as Family and Friends Discounts for frequently used numbers). This running costs consideration is crucial to the potential benefit of e-mail etc. You will notice that, paradoxically, connection through a local node to Australia is cheaper than to a bulletin board just fifty miles away!

So before you sign up (and this will normally mean a monthly or annual subscription) to Demon, Cix, or whoever, *make sure* they do actually have a local access number already operating (a *promised* local node can take a long time to appear sometimes, as I know from personal experience - BW). If you are expecting to only use an 8-bit computer and mainly just the service provider's e-mail facility, it would be folly to pay for a fully-specified Internet/World Wide Web system designed for graphics-based PC and MAC computers.

Does it cost the earth? It certainly need not especially if, like me, you don't mind using second-hand equipment. My serial interface cost me £10 instead of £55 new. My modem cost £15 instead of £100 new (I got given mine - BW). Yes, I bought a commercial software program, but it got me on-line in a 'user friendly' way. You may be luckier, or brainier, and succeed using a public domain program. QTERM is an excellent one, but I couldn't fathom it out personally.

The computer you already have will do, though a second one just for comms might be worth considering at the prices they now change hands.

Remember also that there is a lot of help out there now should you get stuck. When I was getting set up help was a bit thin on the ground. These days, though, help is just a phone call away from you and you don't have to sit at home alone and frustrated. If you get stuck using a bulletin board, key for the sysop. If you don't

mind waiting for a reply, or want to contact 'like minds' put a request in the advertising columns of **8BIT**.

Now let us go back a bit to consider a few fundamentals of connecting your system to another via a modem and phone line. As mentioned earlier, nearly all systems will be described as being configured to 8 bits, 0 (zero) stops, and EVEN parity. You do not need to know what this means, except that it describes the way the information is packaged before it moves from one place to another. The other configuration you will find from time to time is 7, 1, NONE.

A good source of local BBS numbers can be found in your local library, especially if they are connected to a computer terminal (Infobox or similar). Look under the COMPUTER heading and it will be listed somewhere nearby. There are many good BBS dotted around the country. All, or at least 99%, are run as a service to you and cost nothing to access. Donations are always welcome, of course, and when you find one you want to use regularly, it will be much appreciated if you send in the odd £5 or £10 to the sysop - cheap at the price.

The reason I said when you find a good BBS you want to use regularly is that in the first few weeks, months even, you will be experimenting with contacting different BBS until you find one that suits you best and which you contact most. As has been said, it will be cheapest if you settle on one local to you that offers Internet connection of some description in addition to the basic e-mail provision, although this may not be possible and you may have to pay more in the short term to get the service you require now. As more of the country - every country - is covered by local providers, you will be able to switch to obtain the best value.

To be going on with, here is a short list of BBS that I have found to be particularly friendly to 'the smaller user'. None offer full Internet access, but all offer e-mail facilities. These are just the boards that I use myself, so please report back (to Ed Harris and **8BIT** - BW) if you have experience of others.

The London Net BBS	0181 566 5393
Hawks Castle BBS	01344 411621
Bytesize BBS	01787 476487
Spuddy BBS	01268 515441
The Direct Connection BBS	0181 317 2222 (subscription)
The Circuit Board BBS	01705 613182
Castle Gormenghast BBS	01483 823492
Shaking Hands BBS	01252 626233
Lentil BBS	01734 662013

Of those listed, the ones I use most frequently are Lentil, Hawks Castle and Spuddy. The Direct Connection offer a free trial before you sign up. You type in DEMO at the prompt and can then view their sign-up information. Compuserve does not support a CP/M based system for Internet access, they use their own in-house system. Another company that I know who offer shell access is Almac at 01324 665371.

Cix can now be found on 0181 296 9666. This is a voice telephone line and a request to them will get you an information pack. COMM+ has a ready-made built-in facility for Cix, with everything already set up to use once you have signed up and received your access number etc.

While the Internet (as it is usually understood) is text-based, unless your system supports full colour graphics, you will not be able to download the fully graphical WWW (World Wide Web) pages. This should not deter you as you will still be able to receive the text element from the many textual-based services.

Your service provider will probably provide you with a browser - a menu-based

searching tool to display files from areas you have selected, perhaps usernet sites such as comp.sys.amstrad8bit or comp.sys.sinclair.

Spuddy offers the only free Internet access in the UK (although they would welcome donations). There are at least two Web browsers available which can be used with all 8-bit/CP/M systems. One is the confusingly-named WWW, the other is called Lynx and is the better of the two.

Due to the slow clock/processor speed of the 8-bits it is unlikely that any new commercial software will be forthcoming in this area (how about for the new, faster, PCW16? - watch this space -BW), although there is nothing stopping one of you from writing so that the rest of us can benefit from it!

Expect to pay around £6-£10 per month for subscription access to the Internet (except via Spuddy), plus any sign-on charges that your service provider requires.

And now for a stroll down the baud walk. Much news and advertising space is dedicated to the new 28000 bps (bits per second) modems, and how much money they save by shorter telephone connection times. But do we actually need that? The answer is a resounding NO as most 8-bit users will find the faster speeds unreliable *in use* on their computers. If you access the 'Net via a service provider you are using *their* modem for the long-distance stage, then taking it into your at a more sedate rate. As suggested earlier, pick your connection time for cheaper bills. There used to be a special, under-publicised, 'after midnight rate but a call to BT confirmed this has now been discontinued in favour of other schemes such as the low-cost weekend rates and 'family and friends' (frequently used number) discounts.

Most BBS connect you at anything from 300-2400bps, so ignore the hype, you can access parts of the 'Net with your lager cans and bits of string!

In case you are interested, 28800bps is called V34, 14400bps is called V32bis. You may also see V21, V22, V22bis, V23 etc. If there are two different V-numbers quoted, say V23/V21 it means it sends and receives at different maximum speeds. If you are in a position to purchase a 14400 or 28800 modem, you *could* do so but you don't *need* to.

One choice to make is whether to buy a special fax modem or a general one. I cogitated long and hard before deciding on a separate machine for faxes. The problem with having a fax facility on an 8-bit computer is that it cannot multi-task (do more that one significant operation at a time), so if a fax tries to come in when you are doing something else it won't arrive. Similarly, to have 24-hour incoming fax availability, even when you are not using the computer for anything else, you have to leave the computer switched on all the time - not very cost and usage effective, even if you've got a good screen saver, when you can pick up a second-hand fax machine which will *not* tie up your computer for well under £100.

To sum up, if things do go wrong in your electronic wanderings, don't panic. If you switch off the modem (or unplug it or the lead to the phone socket) the phone connection is broken. So that is one pair of ways to start again from the beginning without risking equipment failure. I would always advise taking out your discs before switching off the computer, which is another alternative if everything locks up.

Always, *always*, be sure the contact is disconnected, the modem is switched off or the lead is unplugged from the phone socket once you have finished or if you are leaving the computer unattended, *even for a short while*. Unless you want a phone bill the size of Nicaragua, that is.

What I would ask is that, once you are up and running, note what the various BBS

you contact offered you and what you think about their service. Then please pass them to me as I am in the process of compiling a list of information on BBS and other information services for 8-bit users (The **IEBA** could add it to their Directory too -BW).

I am in the process of setting up a PCW information text page and a Web page on the Internet through Hawks Castle BBS. I could also help configuring COMM+ if you find you need it. Feel free to e-mail me on sirius@lentil.demon.co.uk, phone/fax me on 01344 428938 or write to 121, Bullbrook Drive, Bracknell, Berks RG12 2QR. If you are sending a test e-mail, please phone me first and I can connect up and confirm satisfactory receipt. Do bear in mind, though, that some service providers may take a while to pass on messages. In extreme situations this *could* be up to a couple of days.

<div align="right">Ed Harris.</div>

COMPUTER COMMUNICATIONS - a practical glossary.

While making no claims to be technically precise, the following should clarify some comms terms used in understandable language. More will be explained next issue.

baud	The speed at which information is transmitted. Generally, 'the faster the better' until a system cannot handle it reliably.
BBS	Bulletin Board Service/system(s). An electronic notice board, usually (but not always) having a particular theme, eg Spectrum news. As well as text, there may also be software to download.
E-Mail	Electronic mail, or an example of it, transmitted between computers using a service provider's facilities as the post office through which messages are sent, and from which they can be collected by a subscriber to the system.
E-mail address	For example, brian@spheroid.demon.co.uk, see comms article for a breakdown of its component parts.
Hayes	The international modem standard, like ASCII is for text files.
log-in	sign on to a system, introduce yourself personally.
log-on	connect to a system, without necessarily introducing yourself log-off disconnect from a system, optionally (as a matter of courtesy) leaving a message to say "good-bye" as you do.
protocol	The format in which a service such as a bulletin board handles its communications.
service provider	In this usage, an individual, or more usually an organisation, who puts computing and communication facilities at the disposal of subscribers.
sysop	Someone who operates a bulletin board on his/her computer which may be contacted by a phone connection through a modem from another computer.
usenet newsgroups	Up-market and larger versions of bulletin boards, really, accessed through a bulletin board or other service provider.
WWW	World Wide Web. A system similar in many ways to a bulletin board facility, but with graphics capability included.

LOADED! by Nemesis Productions for the C64/128 - review by Andrew Fisher

Five games on a single disk for the budget price of £15.99 sounds like a good bargain, particularly with so little being released for the C64. Nemesis Productions is the budget arm of Cherry Software, one of the emerging brand of new companies that still deal with the 8-bit machines. But how do the games shape up? The instruction manual included with the disk is well-produced, with clear instructions that occasionally lapse into a European form of English - they know what they want to express, but the correct English word escapes them..

TRIC TRAC sounds like a very basic idea, involving two dice. Each round you throw the dice and then choose which of the numbers 1-9 you flip down, the idea being to clear all 9. You can choose a combination (e.g. roll 8 and choose 5 and 3) or the total, but you must be able to use all the numbers on the dice to get another roll. If you can't, play passes to the next player and you score the value of the numbers you flipped down. After five rounds a winner is declared, and the high scores presented. (My review copy appeared to have a bug in it that meant the high scores were not loaded and saved properly; hopefully this will be fixed in the final version.) Overall, good presentation and music add to a game that is simple to play. If you have a couple of minutes to spare, you might find yourself loading it up again. 6/10.

CARDLAND actually features two games, the first a limited Ping Pong style game. Unfortunately the games industry has moved on a long way since people paid to buy a machine that could only play this, and as such it only detracts from the main game. (Worth noting is the splendid waterfall effect on the title screen and the excellent presentation throughout.) Card Land is basically the classic game of Concentration with a big 10x10 grid of covered squares. You have to unveil a pair, in which case you score points and get another go. When you cannot find a match, play passes to the next player. A computer player with a variable skill level makes a good opponent, or you can play against a friend. I like this version a lot, thanks to the simple control method and smart graphics. 7/10

ON ICE is the star game in this collection, a puzzle game with polished graphics and superb presentation (the whole collection looks like a compilation of slick PD games, but with more effort put into them.) You control a yellow ball and have to move a green ball to your exit square. There are other tiles that have a positive or negative effect, like conveyor belts and bonus points, and the walls of the maze are cleverly curved and shaped to make it an infuriating task without putting you off totally. Two player mode adds something extra; players can select a missile (to kill your opponent), turn into a stone (to protect yourself) or kill yourself and return to your starting point (also available in one player mode.) Each player has an exit tile of their own, and fierce battles ensue. In all, the best game in this collection. 8/10

DEADLINE by Visualize Productions in the UK was popular over here on its initial release (with two other games for just 1.99). Phil Nicholson has produced a polished and playable Defender clone, where the player has to pick up stranded scientists from the planet's surface and deposit them safely at the base. Slick background graphics (including a clever lightning effect and parallax scroll) are not matched by the enemies - they are very derivative of other games and their movement patterns are limited. In all, the game is good fun but lacks a vital spark of playability that makes you want to go back and play Dropzone or Insects in Space again. 7/10 (I strongly suggest you get in touch with Phil Nicholson himself and buy it direct from him for just £1.99 if you are interested in the Defender style of game.)

WONKY WORMS is the weakest of the lot. Flashy presentation and an unusual 3 or 4 player option (requiring two computers and a Turbo-Cross-Assemble style cable) do not add much to a basic game that has been seen and done so many times before. The

worm itself is not even a clever graphic - just a line of connected dots. The two player mode would have benefited from the mines feature found in the three and four player mode. Nice blues music in the background, but poor level design (obstacles are added, but just in the form of straight lines). 5/10

OVERALL

I was slightly disappointed with this overall package; 5 high quality games that have had a lot of care and attention lavished on them, but not really what I would call value for money.

Without wishing to appear too critical, Cherry Software (who run Nemesis Productions) are GOOD for the 64 market if their planned full price releases go ahead. I have seen two excellent demo versions - BOUNCY BALLS (with splendid presentation and an interesting twist in gameplay) and FUTURE WORLD (hyped as a direct competitor to Elite, with better graphics - the presentation for the space stations is fantastic). We will have to see if the gameplay can match up to expectations.

LOADED costs £15.99 for all five games, or any individual title from it may be ordered for £3.99. Cherry Software accept cash or cheques (made payable to Cherry Software) in any currency.

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(At the time of writing there were rumours of a distribution deal for all Cherry Software titles in the UK. I will attempt to keep 8-BIT advised of any developments.)

FISHER NETS BIG PRIZES SHOCK

Yes it's true: Andrew Fisher has bagged both the prizes in our two outstanding competitions from last issue. His entry for "the worst program I ever brought.." runs as follows:

"There are two contenders for this category. The first is the ancient ANIROG game 3D Time Trek..."

"Hang on," interrupts the editor, "there is a pattern forming here. The appalling waste of time which inspired this competition was **Flight Path 737** published by... you guessed it... ANIROG!" That is good enough for me.

"Alan Sugar drives AMS 1" (definitely *not* FAB 1), "what sort of Rolls Royce is it?" was the other outstanding question.

Andrew suggests, "**Canardley**, because his massive ego canardley fit inside it, **Lawyer**, because he spends so much time dealing with them, **Lookatme**, because that's what he wants, **Violin**, because the Psion takeover looks like a massive fiddle," (you might say so, I couldn't possibly comment - BW) "or **Silver Spurs**, because he is always second best."

It *is* actually a **Silver Spur**, so both the prizes are yours, mate.

SUMMER SHORTS - but some are not

1) Anyone for T?

Keith Bull asks if we have a binder for 8BIT, like WACCI (the CPC magazine) does. No, but there are good, cheap, generic A4 magazine binders (which I use) with metal retaining rods available from most large stationers. He also asks if I get any time to myself. No.

On a similar 'merchandising' theme, it has also been suggested a few times that there should be a range of 8BIT T-shirts and sports shirts and I am considering getting some done for sale to readers at cost through a contact from the gift trade. This is all at an early stage of development and the range will probably not see the light of day until 1997, but the following are already possible captions:

"I'm an 8-bit kid"

"Almost as aerodynamic as a C64-CPC-Einstein-PCW-SAM-Spectrum" (completed as applicable)

"I *like* 3"-5¼" discs-disks" (same again)

"If I *wanted* WINDOWS I'd buy a greenhouse"

All other suggestions gratefully received...

And the last point from this Bull in the china shop that is 8BIT concerns mice. In the interest of economy, Keith asks, is there one mouse which will work with his PCW and CPC when using the appropriate versions of Mini-Office on each. Blowed if I know, but it does get me wondering about sharing mice and other peripherals with other machines such as C64s, SAMs and Spectrums. Accepting that plugging and unplugging joysticks, printers and memory packs while the power is on can damage your computers health in a fairly terminal way, can any reader shed further light on this? Before anyone asks, phone connections are an exception.

2) Just what the world needs

Another probable project for next year; a new 8-bit computer. So far the spec includes 256/512k RAM, the latest (fastest) Z80, 3½" drive A, optional drive B, (industry standard) hard drive optional, backward compatibility with previous 8-bit computers' text files and some software, including games. I expect a good DOS, bundled BASIC, CP/M, and office software (including e-mail provision), and output to PC format discs. More news as I have it.

3) Oops Department

In the last 8BIT, I published a piece from Hans-Christof Tuchen, editor of the magazine Mumpitz, on converting C64 Koala pictures to a CPC-readable format. What I should have added is that Hans-Cristof had also sent a 3" CPC disc with the program and some beautiful example picture files.

Also on the disc was an operating demonstration screen of the C64's GEOS desktop. It would be very interesting to those CPC readers who contacted me after the coverage of GEOS in recent 8BITs.

You could obtain a copy by sending a 3" disc and about £2 (English) for postage and packing to Hans-Christof at Lotzstrasse 10, D-12205, BERLIN, Germany. And for those readers who do not speak German, you will find his English is well up to answering any enquiries you have on the programs or his magazine.

The latest issue of Mumpitz reports an electronic version of a series of cassettes which I, erm, came across last year called 'Talk Dirty' (in each of the principal European languages). I am obliged to Hans-Christof for bringing it to our attention so that we can all keep well clear. What a very good job he (probably) hasn't got the address from which it can be obtained.

4) Going For a Song - Desolation Row?

In the last month Escom, who now hold the Commodore copyrights, have hit the buffers with the apparent loss of their retail division, and only today (1st August) the proposed deal to sell large chunks of Amstrad to Psion has fallen through. I wonder if I should

make them an offer?

With Bill Edwards, the guy who has been in charge of the PcW10 project, leaving in 10 days of his own volition for a *proper* job in Cambridge (more details later) rather than face probable redundancy, I reckon the world can look forward to some cheap '16s on the market before long. There are now only 20 bugs in the latest version (v2.79) although the latest official release date is *still* "3 weeks away", as it has been since Sept 1996. The big difference now is that it works.

Ironically, it looks like there will be at least 30 programs and applications at sensible prices for it by Christmas.

5) Help!

Can anyone help me with a full list of the Epson ESC/P 2 series of printer codes, please? I am wanting to write a Protext printer driver for an Epson Stylus 820 and, even in the two handbooks supplied, they cannot manage to find room to list the codes with their effects. Details to Brian Watson at 8BIT.

6) IEBA (non-) News

At the time of writing, there has been a spectacular lack of response to the invitations to take on the job of IEBA exhibitions manager. Can it be the summer lull? A shame really, as the committee had thought it would be a nice satisfying little job for someone with time on his/her hands.

One member has expressed the opinion that the Association should not sell consumer goods as it would antagonise existing retailers, it would be better to direct potential customers to them and thus encourage their continuing support of our hobby. Sounds good to me.

7) My computer's better...Chapter 1001

Norman Davies asked what the minimum practical order for a new batch of 3" discs would be. Any ideas, anyone?

He has recently compared running an array-filling test on a Spectrum +2a (almost 4 minutes) and a CPC (25 seconds). Mind you, the CPC rom chips don't keep your coffee hot whereas...

8) My computer's better...Chapter 1002

What's the difference between a CPC and a dinosaur? At least they make films about dinosaurs.

9) Didn't he Used to be on Top Gear?

Allan (oh, *Allan*) Clarkson of **Crashed** announces he is organising the first Northern SAM and Spectrum Show for 21st September in Wetherby, Yorks. It's in the Methodist Hall, so *don't* bring a bottle. The press release looks very professional and the Show looks like a must for 8-bit readers. *Take this copy of 8BIT with you to get in for just £1.* I, for one, will be going to get my mitts on a SAM for the first time: I might even come home with one. See advert elsewhere for further details or phone Allan on 0113 237 4800.

10) Apparently **Format PC** (covering the early PC computers) from the estimable Bob Brenchley is still imminent. More details as we get them.

11) Issue 10 (all 60 pages of it, by golly!) of **Commodore Scene** (formerly **Computer Scene**) is now available from Richard Bowen for just £2.50 incl p&p from 35, Nottingham Road, Nuthall, NOTTINGHAM NG16 1DN.

Richard asks in his letter if I know what the best way is to go about becoming a registered non-profit making organisation. I don't know if this is a reference to the Independent Eight Bit Association, which isn't 'registered' as that, it just *doesn't* make profits for any individuals (quite the contrary, he added ruefully). Such money as it has is spent on promoting 8-bit computer use through projects like its Directory of Services.

I suppose the glib answer is; if you want a non-profit making organisation, just publish an 8-bit fanzine. But then we both already know that.

12) Ed Harris, whose prose seems to fill most of this issue, offers a punctual

DTP, printing, binding, addressing, envelope stuffing and sending service. His prices look competitive too. Call 01344 428938 for more details.

13) Heere's Richard ... again!

Richard Bowen (see above) of **Commodore Scene** has pooled resources with Vincenzo Mainolfi of **Hackersoft** to produce a joint newsletter. I'm not going to give it all away.. send them an SAE for a copy at Richard's address

14) How I Spend my Nights

I get many enquiries lately, especially after the home Publishing series, about how I produce **8BIT**. In fact, production is mainly done with CP/M Protext on my CPC6128 Plus, as I have found the keystroke customising easy and the use of columns is easily achieved, even when I want to change the format (as for this issue's small adverts). This program is the same version produced for PCWs and operates virtually the same on both computers.

It includes very fast spell-checking facilities, a *must* for me, and the fact that I own the copyright is really neither here nor there.

The back of my Plus fairly closely resembles a Christmas tree, what with a Multiface, a full open-top 16-slot ROMbox, a silicon disc, a mouse (which I never use), to say nothing of the 2 joypads, 3½" 800k second disc drive, printer lead to the Canon BJ200 and a dongle in the analogue joystick port (for Smart Plus, I seem to recall?).

Once the articles have been written and/or compiled and merged into standard single page layout templates these are saved and dumped to A4 paper in my printer with appropriate spaces left on the pages to physically cut-and-paste adverts using ReMount spray. These sheets are then delivered to my local photocopying company who run off the compiled sets and comb-bind them for me.

I then add the accompanying letters which I have mail-merged while the photocopier is doing his stuff, and put them together in the labelled envelopes.

Protext/Promerge produces the labels which are generally printed on or about the 25th of the month to ensure the subscriber list is as up to date as possible. If I am a bit unintelligible on the phone the day after shipment day it is because I am recovering from licking a little over 650 stamps.

15) News from the Front

I am in receipt of the latest war bulletin from Martyn Sherwood of **Prism PD** and it is the usual rivetting read. I particularly like the yellow highlighter this time - a feature not often found, even in the best produced newsletters. Yup, very dramatic. I am not sure quite what the two fish signify but they are cetainly better drawn than 8BIT's cover this issue.

16) News from round the Corner

More Martyn Sherwood doings - he's a busy fella this month. As the new editor of the United Amstrad User Group's magazine **CPC User**, he has done a really good job in re-vamping its style. Some of the finer fonts don't reproduce well when reduced (I assume) to A5 from A4, especially near the page edges, but the overall look is quite fresh and he is obviously applying himself to the task of pulling in new writers. John Packham, the previous editor, always had a struggle to fill the pages, so let's hope a new hand on the tiller can deliver the goods.

If I could make a suggestion, it would be to find a technically qualified person to answer the queries which find their way into the letter columns. In this issue it is implied that the second 64k of memory and the BANKMAN program are the only significant differences between a 6128 and a 464, when in fact the larger machine's Basic has some quite different commands.

But I'm nit-picking; it's a very promising re-launch.

17) It's him *again*

In the letter which accompanied his

advert, Martyn tells me there is a new magazine about called **8 BIT POWER**, (Hm, that sounds familiar) the inheritor of the mantle of a one-issue predecessor called **IMPERIAL**. Martyn tells me the new magazine contains some very rude jokes. I'd quite like to see a copy to see ~~if I've heard them~~ just what filth is getting published these days in the guise of a computer magazine, but unfortuntely I do not have an address for them.

18) Not So 'Away From it All'

If you get computer-withdrawal while on holiday in or near Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, and don't want to waste your money in the arcades, I can direct you to a good place to while away a few hours.

Tom Lee and Martin Smith, the proprietors of **Computer Doctor Ltd** at 145a, King Street, Great Yarmouth, offer Internet browsing facilities on a pay-as-you-go basis, and will even set up your very own Web page for you.

If you are in the area and want to call in, you can leave the car in any of the town centre car parks as it is only a short walk from any of them. Their phone number is 01493 856523.

19) Two More Shows

Computer shows are rather a rarity in the East of England so Essex County Newspapers are stepping into fairly virgin territory by mounting two **Computer and Information Technology** Shows. One is on Sunday 27th October in the Riverside Ice and Leisure Centre in the middle of Chelmsford and the other is in the Charter Hall, Colchester on 10th November. Stands cost between £110 and £125.

If only the IEBA had an exhibitions officer... You can phone 01206 761212 for further details.

20) And another

The latest copy of **Einstein Magazine** contains a flyer sponsored by **Romneyrail** warning about forged £20 notes plus another for **David Sinclair**'s security

systems but that's not important right now. What *is* important is the other one advertising the Stafford Computer and Electronics Show. This is to be held at the Staffordshire Showground, just off junction 14 of the M6, on 9th November. Phone 01473 741533 for further details.

21) The Twerp standing at Platform One

In a move that looks like madness to me, issue 15 of **Crashed** (Spectrum only, thank goodness) has an enormous Willy compilation as a covertape. Not only Manic Miner and Jet Set Willy, but Jet Set Willy 2 too.

If you are as old as me and had one of the principal gamesplaying computers about 10 years ago, you could not have missed the first 2 of the trilogy. Both were much hyped upon release and set the standard for platform games at the time.

Now we are all much older, and the country is in such a parlous state, that what old Blighty does *not* need is the cream of its young 20-somethings wasting their evenings on this rehash of their lost teenage years.

If you *must* have it, you sad person, phone Allan Clarkson on 0113 232 6726 for the price, but don't say I sent you.

22) Full Internet for £12 a year?

Yes, it must be the bargain of the year. If you read the huge e-mail and Internet article in this month's issue you might be tempted by the **Chic Computer Club**'s offer of full Internet access for just £1 a month. **Chic** are a club for users of all computers with all the usual facilities (magazines, special interest groups, discounts etc) as well as this special one. Send an SAE to CHIC CLUB (8M), PO Box 121, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 9JP for the full story.

23) Minitel, Le Premier Service Francais

If I had not run out of space and time, this issue would have carried a feature on Minitel, a system rather like Teletext in the UK, but interactive. Our recent French visitor filled in the gaps of what I already knew. But now it will have to way until another day.

NOTES FOR ADVERTISERS:

1) Advertisements for **8BIT** number 14 must be received by 15th September 1996. Don't blame me if you miss it!

2) Please mention **8BIT** when you are responding to advertisements.

3) Please help readers by including your town's name and county if you are only quoting a phone number eg: 01353 (Ely, Cambs) 777006. Show any time limits you would like respected and give your name.

4) 'Small' advertisements of over 50 words are not small and will be cut.

5) In the interests of not wasting space in **8BIT** with items which have probably been dealt with by their second insertion, *all* small adverts (apart from the Club and Service announcements) will be dropped after three issues unless I receive a notification that the item can come out before time's up, or a renewal request (both in writing, please).

So that advertisers can check their 'countdown to oblivion', a subscribers' first insertion will be suffixed with REF:3, the second will be suffixed REF:2, and the last one before deletion will be suffixed REF:1. Clubs etc will carry the suffix REF:C (for continuous).

Subscribers to 3 or less issues of **8BIT** will be credited with the appropriate number of insertions, pro rata. For example, someone subscribing to two issues will start their countdown with a REF:2

COPY REQUIREMENTS FOR 8BIT:

These are **8BIT**'s requirements for all copy which is to be considered for publication:

1) All copy being submitted must be as one of the following: (1) any format of PC, CPC or PCW discs or 2) *white* paper. Coloured paper may look good for direct mailings, but it all goes grey in a photocopier.

2) Please, please, do not use an old ribbon or excessively fancy fonts.

3) You can e-mail copy to **8BIT** at: 8bit@spheroid.demon.co.uk.

2) If you want something (headers, your witticisms, etc) emphasised, underline the relevant passage and I will make it conform to **8BIT**'s house style, such as it is.

3) If you would like your original copy returned, please enclose a NEW, self-addressed, envelope of an appropriate size with the correct postage. I will then copy *your* copy, return *your* copy, and work from *my* copy of *your* copy. Get me?

4) Copy for photo-reproduction should have the same proportions as those needed for reproduction (and if you send a horizontal display advert to go into a vertical space; it won't go - hence the sideways insertions).

5) Remember that there must be white space around each image to ensure that information is not lost when it is pasted up and photocopied:

An image for a 'full page' should be NO MORE than 245mm x 175mm.

A top or bottom 'half-page' image should be NO MORE than 120mm x 175mm. A left or right 'half-page' column should be NO MORE than 85mm x 245mm.

A 'quarter-page' image should be NO MORE than 120mm x 85mm.

Images submitted larger than this may be trimmed or unusable in **8BIT** so re-size them yourself unless you trust me and my *terribly* sharp guillotine.

HOW TO GET PUBLISHED:

I cannot guarantee that every article submitted will be published but there are some guidelines which, if followed, are more likely to get your work accepted:

1) Conform to the above requests on acceptable media.

2) Articles of *general interest* to all 8-bit computer users are more likely to be used in **8BIT** than those which are only relevant to one computer. Articles on communicating between different types of computer are particularly welcome. If you have written a good piece on one specific computer, submit it first to the editor of a single-computer magazine. I'm sure it will be very welcome.

3) From issue 12, published articles or features are paid for at the rate of 1 free issue of **8BIT** per page published. The basis for this will be the finished, edited, size; so if a ten page article submitted is edited down to four pages prior to publication, it will be paid for by 4 free consecutive issues of **8BIT**. Half and part pages will be rounded up as long as they accompany a full page, and 'nearly' pages on their own may be counted as a full page.

In the event of any dispute over payment the editor's judgement is final. At the moment there simply isn't the margin for cash payments, but it is my intention to introduce a payment scale with *real money* as **8BIT** continues to grow. I will try to be fair on this - don't shoot the editor; he's doing his best.

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION:

I hope **8BIT** readers find the new way of managing the pages of small advertisements reasonable.

It was put to me when I raised the issue of my problem of space for clearing the backlog of articles that an offer of 30 3" discs at £1 each was unlikely to still stand after a year, so should have been gone by now, one way or another.

An advertisement which does not get a worthwhile response within three insertions is probably either (a) an unattractive offer for some reason, possibly (but not only) in its price or (b) in the wrong magazine for the item advertised.

Brian Watson

COMMODORE - FOR SALE

Commodore tape games for sale. BMX Simulator 2, Barry McGuighan World Championship Boxing, Gary Lineker's Superstar Soccer all at 50p plus p&p. World Cup Carnival '86 at £3.50 plus p&p. Contct Mark Surridge, COLCHESTER (01206) 792155 REF:3

Commodore 64/128 games and books for sale. Also some other software and hardware. Please send A4 SAE for list to: Miss C Hurlock, 8c, Hamlet Court Rd, Westcliff on Sea, Essex SS0 7LX REF:3

C64 Software; 800 titles SAE for price list to Alan, 18, West Street, Geddington, Northants NN14 1BD REF:3

C64/128 productivity software, games, books and hardware. Many sought-after items available (1581 disk drive, CBM Modem, 2 Meg RamDrive, Newsroom, PrintShop Companion, Easyscript, GeoChart, Geos Inside and Out and scores more). Send for lists (stamp appreciated). Michael D Pearson, 31, Saxon Close, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire CV37 7DX REF:3

COMMODORE - WANTED

Calling all C64 users! If you have a 5¼" disk driveand want to swap PD (that's PD *only*), demos, disk mags, **games and utilities then get in touch** now. Write, enclosing PD list, to Simon Hillam, 61, Tower Street, GAINSBOROUGH, Lincs DN21 2JF. GO on - I don't bite, you know. REF:3

WANTED: Trojan light pen, disk, and tape software for the Commodore 64. Also many items for sale and technical help given for free - just send an SAE or an international reply coupon. Write to Andrew Fisher, 2, Elfleda Road, CAMBRIDGE CB5 8LZ or call 01223 561433 REF:3

Wanted Printshop 64, new or second hand - must be complete. Manual for MPS801 and help with Speedscript. Contact M Surridge, 99, Canterbury Road, COLCHESTER, Essex CO2 7RY. Tel: 01206 (Colchester) 792155 REF:3

WANTED! Commodore Format issues 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 37, 40, 41, and 47 - all in vgc with tapes please. Also wanted: any old Zzap 64s, Commodore Forces, Your Commodores, or Commodore Users. All vgc with tapes. Any reasonable offers considered. Call 01427 (Gainsborough) 610912. REF:3

COMMODORE - MISC

Commodore 64 Technical advice:- If you have a C64/128 technical problem write to me, Andrew Fisher, former technical consultant to Commodore Force and Commodore Format, at 2, Elfleda Road, CAMBRIDGE CB5 8LZ England. Enclose an SSAE or an International Reply Coupon for a fast reply. REF:C

AMSTRAD CPC - FOR SALE

6128/CTM644/extras, £85+p&p. LQ3500 (24pin) mechanism (no case/power supply) £35. 464/CTM640/discdrive/extras (no f0 key) £70. 3.5" drive c/w sideswitch £45. ACE 1-47 £55, also many ACUs and AAs (no covertapes). Send SAE for lists. ALSO A WANTED: Manual or help for Micro Simplex (6128 version). 01376 344572. R Everett, 2, Coldnailhurst Avenue, BRAINTREE, Essex CM7 2SJ. REF:3

Six 3" discs for sale @ £1 each incl p&p. Contact Mark Surridge (COLCHESTER, Essex) 01206 792155 REF:3

CPC Software; 500 titles SAE for price list to Alan, 18, West Street, Geddington, Northants NN14 1BD REF:3

Amstrad CPC Database Software "Mini-Office" on 3" disc complete with instructions. Plus Dr Logo & Help. CP/M Plus system utilities. SAE to Alan, 18, Walton Drive, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 4UZ REF:3

An unusual CPC464 (in Britain) with the Spanish keyboard layout £10 + p&p or possible free delivery available. Phone Brian Watson 01353 777006 REF:3

Amstrad CPC464 games for sale. Send SAE for list to: 29, Curlew, Wilnecote, TAMWORTH, Staffs B77 5PL or phone 01827 260729 after 7pm REF:3

Amstrad Action issues 52-55, 57, 59-64, 67, 69-72, 74, 75, 77-79, 81, 82 (no covertapes). £10 the lot. Telephone: 0161 439 (Stockport) 7034 7-10pm REF:3

Amstrad Action covertapes 35-51 50p each + p&p. Phone Derek on 01745 (Denbigh, Clwyd) 730498. REF:3

LOADS OF CPC ITEMS FOR SALE - Tapes, Discs, Magazines, Books. For list send a SSAE TO T.Davies, 8, Garden Suburbs, Trimsaran, Nr Kidwelly, Dyfed SA17 4AB REF:3

Amstrad Action covertapes 21-46 inclusive for offers. Amstrad CPC464 keyboard and CTM640 colour monitor for spares. Also massive collection of tape software to be included (for details send SAE) Only £50 the lot! Mr Peter Jones, *Greystones*, 27, Town Gate, Calverley, PUDSEY, West Yorkshire, LS28 5NW. Tel: 0113 (LEEDS) 2394011 REF:3

Xenomorphs: new game by David Hall only £2. Also comes with previously unseen PD software. Send a 3" disc, SAE and cheque or postal order to:- David Hall, 280, Derbyshire Lane West, Stretford, MANCHESTER, M32 9LU. NEWS FLASH - mention **8BIT** and save £1 (half price) REF:3

For Sale: **Amstrad Action** 16-23, 25, 28, 30, 35, 37-39, 43, 48, 50-59, 71, 89, 91-95, 98-100. **Amstrad Computer User** Sep 86-Jul 89, Sep 89-Jun 90, Aug 90, Mar 92. **Computing With The Amstrad** Jun 87-Oct 87 + April 88. **CPC Attack** Jun and Sep 92. **CPC Computing** Dec 88. Many with cassettes. £1.50 each inc p&p. Discount for 5+. JW Gamble, 31, Cornmills Road, Soham, Cambs CB7 5AT. Ref:3

Amstrad CPC games for sale. Tapes from 25p, discs from £2. Please send A4 SAE for list to: Miss C Hurlock, 8c, Hamlet Court Rd, Westcliff on Sea, Essex SS0 7LX REF:3

Replacement disc drive belts for CPC and PCW 3" drives (also Spectrum). Flat type belts with full but simple fitting instructions. £2.45 including postage and packing. Mr AJ Howard, 65, Altyre Way, BECKENHAM, Kent BR3 3ED REF:C

AMSTRAD CPC - FOR SALE - contd

FOR SALE. The following tape games: Batman, Rollaraound, Superstar Challenge, NightBreed, - all 50p each + p&p. Also Mini Office on tape. Please contact Mark Johnson, 13, Ashway, Corringham, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex SS17 9EB or telephone 01375 677631 for more details. REF:3

FOR SALE: a CPC6128 computer with colour monitor, extra external 3" drive, tape recorder, joystick, some games and some serious discs, Mini-Office 11. Offers. Tel: 01642 617656 REF:3

Large list of 2nd hand CPC tape and disc Software at sensible prices. All originals with instructions. Send 1st class stamp and return label for lists. BA Watson, c/o **8BIT** magazine. REF:C

LOADS OF CPC goodies: Tapes, Discs, Roms, Books, Magazines and Hardware. For list send A5 SSAE: *Brympton Cottage*, Brunswick Road, WORTHING, Sussex BN11 3NQ. REF:C

Amstrad Actions: 29-41 (Feb 88-Feb 89), 46 (Jul 89), also ACU for May 1990. £1 each incl p&p. BA Watson, c/o **8BIT** magazine. REF:3

AMSTRAD CPC - WANTED

WANTED FOR CPC: RS232, Videomaster Dart Scanner, **Amstrad Action** - 123457834 and 38. **ACU** of 1986 - Mar, May, Sep. **ACU** of 1987 - May, Jun, Jul, and Sep. **VACCI** - all back issues from 4-30. Plus other fanzines that I don't have, please write to me at: Rafael Delgado Peiro, c/ Cyesa 3-1-D, 28017 - MADRID, Spain REF:2

Wanted Amstrad Action issues 1-28, 33, 36, 37, 45 and 52 with covertapes. Will pay up to £1.50 each. Also wanted Bonzo Scrapyard newsletters - will pay 50p each. Philip Barrass, 12, Westburn Terrace, Roker, Sunderland SR6 9RB REF:3

Wanted AMX mouse for use with 6128. Reasonable amount paid. Telephone: 0161 439 (Stockport) 7034 7-10pm REF:3

Games wanted for CPC, tape or disk

please. Send your price list to Martin Bela, 11, Colwell Drive, Brookside, Alvaston, Derby DE24 0UP REF:2

DESPERATELY WANTED; an internal 3" drive for my 6128+ (5v). Also Amtix issue 1. Angela in Worthing: 01903 206739 REF:3

WANTED: Complete circuit board for 464 (Mk2 condensed version; joystick + I/O ports on left side). Independent power supply (5v+12v output), for 6128 used without Amstrad monitor. Vgc daisywheels for Dyneer DW16. Megamaths on tape or disc. Write: Mr N Davies, Flat 1, 39, Broad Street, Newtown, Powys SY16 2BQ REF:2

WANTED: **ACU** for Nov '84 to Feb '85, Jun '86 to Oct '86, Sep '87 to Dec '87, April '90, Sep '90. Also **Amstrad Action** 1 and 2 and **Amtix** 1, 3 to 5, and 10 - 14. Also Pre-40 issues of **VACCI**, **CPC User** 1, any issues of **CPC Power**, **CPC Now** from 4 onwards, **Rundschlag** 1-8. Peter Curgenven, *The Hollyar*, *Bay Road, Trevone Bay, Near Padstow, Cornwall PL28 8QZ*. Tel: 01841 520875 REF:3

Wanted for Amsrad CPC 6128: these adventures on disc - Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy (Infocom), Ingrid's Back (Level 9), Also wanted, these games on disc - Meltdown (Alligator), Knight Games (English Software), **Amstrad Action** magazines issues 1-7 inclusive. The cover prices offered. Jo Wood, 38, Stonehill Drive, Rooley Moor, ROCHDALE, Lancs OL12 7JN. Telephone: 01706 861185 REF:3

VACCI 3-20, 22-31, 35 & 51, **ACU** Jan-Aug '86 or before, Jul-Dec '87, all '88, May, Oct, Nov '90, Jun '92 onward. Disc drive DD1 or FD1. Service manuals. Christine Raisin, tel: 0115 (NOTTINGHAM) 9765163 REF:3

'ROMBO ROMBOX' wanted for original Amstrad CPC 6128. State price wanted. Apply: Mr RE Hobday, 43, Cody Road, Clapham, BEDFORD, Beds. MK41 6ED REF:3

'DISC BASE' + a manual for CPC. £6 (incl p&p.) RE Hobday, 43, Cody Road, Clapham, BEDFORD, Beds MK41 6ED REF:3

    *   *   *

CPC - MISCELLANEOUS

Help needed to repair a Multiface 2 which becomes hot in use and ceases to function. Please contact Matthew on 01684 (Tewkesbury) 274993. Cost to be discussed REF:3

VACCI. If you have a CPC then you need us. Send a 29p stamp to: **VACCI**, 7, Brunswood Green, Hawarden, Deeside, CLWYD CH5 3JA to see what you are missing! REF:C

KING ARTHUR'S DOMAIN is a disc PD Library for the CPC. We have games, utilities, music, clip art, a large selection of CP/M programs and lots more. For catalogue, send 3"/3½" disc + SSAE to: **KAD**, *Brympton Cottage*, Brunswick Road, WORTHING, Sussex BN11 3NQ. REF:C

ARE YOU A FRUSTRATED AMSTRAD CPC USER seeking help and support? Then why not join the **United Amstrad User Group** for PD material (small copy *charge), concessions and support, a* bi-monthly magazine, all for £8 per annum. Send SAE to Gordon Wooliscroft, 2, Wrenbeck Drive, Otley, West Yorkshire LS21 2BR for details. REF:C

Bonzo's Scrapyard, the newsletter for CPC tape to disc transfers via the **Bonzo** suite of programs. Price - a large SSAE plus an extra 1st class stamp. From: **Bonzo's Scrapyard**, 29, Chapter Road, Strood, ROCHESTER, Kent. ME2 3PX REF:C

GD.PD: The ultimate in PD software at only 25p per disc side (copy charge) for your Amstrad CPC. For the GD.PD list send an SSAE to: Dave Stitson, 6, Connaught Avenue, Mutley, PLYMOUTH, Devon PL4 7BX REF:3

AMSTRAD PCW - FOR SALE

6 x 3" discs for sale @ £1 each inc p&p. Contact Mark Surridge 01206 (COLCHESTER, Essex) 792155 REF:3

Amstrad PCW8256/8512 parts for DIY repair: 3" drives, CPU boards, Power boards, Tubes, Keyboards, printers, etc. Also some books and software.

continued.........

AMSTRAD PCW - FOR SALE - contd

Advice freely given. SAE please for lists and info. Ron King, 19, Stancliffe Road, BEDFORD, Beds MK41 9AN REF:3

Unused 3" LocoScript and CP/M software for Amstrad 8000 or PCW9512 £10. Amstrad PC-CM to fit PC1512 £25. PCW10 user manual, new £6. PC1512 and PC1640 5¼" software £5. Various Amstrad keyboards £6. Mr Dodds 01388 (BISHOP AUKLAND) 606744 REF:3

Hardware, 3" discs, back issue magazines, programming books, games, stationery, software and much, much, more. Please send large stamped, addressed envelope for full list to:- Mr JW Gamble, 31, Cornmills Road, Soham, ELY, Cambs CB7 5AT REF:1

Desktop Publisher + mouse/interface £25, MD3 Network 3½" (v1.05) £12.50, MD3 MicroDisplay 3½" £12.50. SD Microsystems Mini Publisher £12.50, Fancy Borders £7.50, Super Labeller £12.50. ALL C/W MANUALS. SD Picture Disc - Fun Christmas £2.50. Mr W Downie, 8, Smithy Road, STRANRAER, DG9 8LP. Tel: 01776 704363. REF:3

QUIKMYTH: a Locofile database on 3½" disc in 4 versions: (1) Greek mythology (126k) £5, (2) Greek and Norse Myth (168k) £7.50, (2.1) Greek, Norse and Celtic Notes (212k) £10, and (3) Egyptology - 180k - £9.50. Cheques to: DJ Gaskin, 119, London Road, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4NP REF:3

12 brain-twisting games from SPARK Software for the PCW including Coconut Shy and Fishing. Send cheque for £5 to Mr C McKenzie, 20, Macclesfield Road, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 1NR. Specify 3" or 3½" disc REF:3

Masters with manuals: LS/LM temp disc £5, Matrix Locofont £6, Flipper v3.10 £15 - STILL AVAILABLE WRONG INFORMATION GIVEN TO CALLER IN APRIL. Sybil Fox 67, Alder Lodge, Stevenage Road, LONDON SW6 6NR. 0171 381 1445. REF:3

AMX Stop Press, Caxton Condor 1, Caxton Scratchpad+/Smartkey - £15 ea. Tas-Sign, Lord of the Rings game 1 - £10 ea, Synergy Sharemaster, MAP

Initnon ledger system £20 ea. SCA Professional + interface - £45. Cut cable 9pin female to 25pin female - free. AEG Olympia FCC 1D2 interface 36pin to 20pin ribbon - £30. JR Cross, *The Parciau*, Clyro, Hay-on-Wye, HEREFORD HR3 5SG REF:3

AMSTRAD PCW - WANTED

Wanted "Cyrus II Chess" game with instruction leaflet for use with PCW9256 using 3½" drive (or CPC 6128 version) Keith J Bull, *Le Coié*, 60, Hildaville Drive, WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA, Essex SS0 9RU. Tel: 01702 339894. Thank you. REF:3

Wanted for PCW8512:- A 720k drive B in working order, also Digital Research's Assembler and Disassembler, 3" discs of both types for a PCW, any PCW books such as **The Amstrad CP/M Plus** by David Powys-Lybbe and Andrew RM Clarke (published by MML), **CP/M Software Bus** by A Clarke, JM Eaton & D Powys-Lybbe (publ by Sigma Technical Press). Write to: J-C Maurin, 3, Square Gabriel Faure, 75017 PARIS, France. REF:3

WANTED: User Instruction manual for an Amstrad PCW9512 with daisywheel printer. Eileen. 01621 (Maldon, Essex) 788273 REF:3

Wanted: AMS30L Disc boxes, SCA Pro-interface, LocoFile 3 for a PCW9512. Phone Vic on 01268 (Canvey, Essex) 514142 REF:3

For Sale: AZ-330 Olympus Super zoom camera with an infra-red remote unit, filters, soft case. £175. Would consider part exchange for PCW hardware. Phone: Ted 01275 (Bristol) 340565 REF:3

Wanted: any help or information concerning PCW9256 - Programs, games, Locoscript 3, upgrade memory with chips, 3½" disks. Mr WA Warren, 25, Milton Avenue, ANDOVER, Hants SP10 3DP REF:3

I would appreciate details of any items for sale or exchange related to PCW8512. Hardware, printers, software, peripherals, programs, discs, manuals, books, etc. Require especially any items related to Protext or Basic, and

manuals for Microdesign, Masterfile 8000, Dbase II, Frank Bohan, 13, New Road, Elsenham, BISHOPS STORTFORD, Herts. CM22 6HA REF:3

PCW - MISCELLANEOUS

Proposed PCW in club in South London hanging fire at present as no-one is available to run it and arrange shared equipment use with youth club where PCWs are housed. Contact Mrs Sybil Fox 67, Alder Lodge, Stevenage Road, LONDON SW6 6NR. 0171 381 1445. REF:C

Berkshire Amstrad PCW Users Club offers you FREE telephone support, FREE magazine/book loan, FREE machineloan, FREE newsletter. FREE access tobulletin boards etc. FREE Special offers - eg 3" discs only £10 per 10.SAE for details to Ed Harris, 121, Bullbrook Drive, BRACKNELL, Berks RG12 2QR REF:C

Globe-trotting, or just interested? Contact CAPITAL COMPUTER CLUB, c/o Ray C Petersen (the Secretary), 21, Mapplebeck Street, Titahi Bay, Porirua, New Zealand. The Club now has members with Amstrads (all sorts), Amigas, Macs, Sanyos and PCs with DOSand CP/M. They subscribe to PCW Plus so are well up to date. New members are welcome at each monthly meeting. REF:C

The Cornwall PCW Club meets on the second Saturday of each month (July and August excepted) in St Austell. All those interested in PCWs are most welcome to join us. Details from John Walker on 01752 (Plymouth) 706266 REF:C

TRACK is the name of the very useful free advertising feature section of SCOTWEST.pcw, the magazine of the PCW Club of the same name. For more details contact David Williams, 32/34, Carfin Street, New Stevenston, MOTHERWELL ML1 4JL Scotland. 01698 732403 REF:C

SINCLAIR SPECTRUM - FOR SALE

Cheap Spectrum Software and

SINCLAIR SPECTRUM - FOR SALE - Contd

hardware for sale. Send an SAE for a 7-page list. Prices start at just 10p. Write to Chris (**8BIT**), *Glenhirst*, Station Road, Swineshead, Near BOSTON, Lincs PE20 3NX REF:3

Six 3" discs for sale @ £1 each incl p&p. Contact Mark Surridge (COLCHESTER, Essex) 01206 792155 REF:3

Spectrum +3 drive belts. £2.45 inc P&P from AJ Howard, 65, Altyre Way, BECKENHAM, Kent BR3 3ED REF:3

50 games from 50p each + various covertapes. SAE to S Swainson, 7, Upper Hill Rise, RICKMANSWORTH, Herts WD3 2NU REF:2

Spectrum games for sale from 50p each. Send SAE for list to: Pauline Fuller, 4, *Whitehouse Cottages*, Sot's Hole Bank, Holbeach St Matthews, SPALDING, Lincs PE12 8EJ REF:3

Spectrum Software; tapes and discs, games and serious. SAE for massive list to Alan, 18, West Street, Geddington, Northants NN14 1BD REF:3

SINCLAIR SPECTRUM - WANTED

Wanted for Spectrum Plus 3 - a word processor with print out facility with or without spell checker as well. Contact Geoff 0171 474 (E London) 2869. Leave information on answerphone with phone number or address REF:3

Cassette lead for Spectrum +3 desperately wanted! Please write to: Nicholas Campbell, 24, Ballyminstragh Road, Killinchy, Newtownards, Co Down, N Ireland BT23 6RE REF:3

Wanted for Spectrum +3 Multiface3. Willing to pay a good price. Also a copy of Zulu Wars on tape or disc. Willing to buy or swap for any games I may have of interest. Please contact Peter Stevens, 41, Nelson Street, Rosyth, FIFE KY11 2JU. Phone: 01383 419075 REF:3

Wanted: Any back issues and/or the covertapes of **Sinclair User** and **Your Sinclair**. Write with prices required to Nicholas Campbell 24 Ballyminstragh Road, Killinchy, Newtownards, Co Down,

N Ireland, BT23 6RE REF:3

WANTED FOR MY SPECTRUM. Old platform and ladder games. Also any second-hand SAM software. Write to: John Turner, 58, Burnside, PARBOLD, Lancs WN8 7PE REF:3

MISCELLANEOUS SMALL ADVERTS

Did you know? The **IEBA** (Independent Eight Bit Association) is a group active in promoting the use of 8-bit computers. The first edition of their **Directory** of **8-bit Services** is now out and is free to members. Life Membership is £5. For further details send 2 1st class stamps to Brian Watson c/o **8BIT** magazine. REF:C

Free to a good home. For a BBC: AMX Art and Games Galore. SAE to S Swainson, 7, Upper Hill Rise, RICKMANSWORTH, Herts WD3 2NU REF:3

FOR SALE: Citizen 120D+ dot matrix printer. Includes traction feeder and recent ribbon. £100ono. Tel: 0161 439 (Stockport) 7034 from 7pm-10pm weekdays or weekends. REF:3

WANTED (for *any* 8-bit computer): any information on music score-editing programs that support tablature for guitar. It is important that the application must also support conventional music symbols and typesetting rules (as per a music magazine). Phone 01469 574248 (office hours); 94 Margaret Street, IMMINGHAM, South Humberside DN40 1JY REF:3

FOR SALE: Atari XL/XE games for sale. Send SAE for list to: 29, Curlew, Wilnecote, TAMWORTH, Staffs B77 5PL or phone 01827 260729 after 7pm REF:3

WANTED: A manual for Mannesmann Tally 290 printer. Please telephone first to 01253 (BLACKPOOL) 762092 REF:3

FOR SALE: CPC464, col/monitor, games £35; col/monitor for 464 £25; Dragon32, games £20; Spectrums £15-£30; Sharp MZ700 £10; Sharp MZ80B + disc drive + printer, £30; Einstein, software, colour monitor £30; BBC model B + discdrive, £35; Atari8000XL,

disc drive, tape etc £40; Oric1 £20; Toshiba MSX £20. Contact Ed Harris at Berks PCW Users Club 01344 428938. REF:3

FOR SALE. Star LC100 Colour Printer. Virtually as new; almost unused other than self-tests. 1 black ribbon + 2 4- colour ribbons, 1 metre Centronics cable, manual, original packing. £115. The intended use with existing inkjet not practicable. Purchaser to arrange the transport or shipping. N Bannister, 86, King Edward Drive, GRAYS, Essex RM16 4AQ. (01375 374732) REF:3

WANTED: Printer manuals for Epson FX-1000, Amstrad 3000, Dyneer Daisy DW16. Write (only) to Mr N Davies, Flat 1, 39, Broad Street, Newtown, Powys SY16 2BQ REF:2

Atari 800XE/XL games for sale. Please send SSAE for list to Tim Asson, 29, Curlew, Wilnecote, TAMWORTH, Staffs B77 5PL or phone 01827 (Tamworth) 260729 after 7pm REF:3

LOADS OF GOODIES for your Spectrum, Apricot, Games console, PC: Tapes, Discs, Roms, Books, Magazines and Hardware. For list send A5 SSAE to: *Brympton Cottage*, Brunswick Road, WORTHING, Sussex BN11 3NQ. REF:C

Atari 800XL. Mint, 2 disc drives, Datacorder, loads of discs, plus spare keyboard. £40. APPLE IIE with loads of spares incl. (massive) service manuals and cards, discs, motherboard, etc. Write to: Mr N Woodbridge at 30, Hospital Street, NANTWICH, Cheshire CW5 5RP or phone 01270 628979 REF:3

CP/M SUPPORT: The Public Domain Software Library, *Winscombe House*, Beacon Road, CROWBOROUGH, Sussex. (Tel: 01892 663298) owns large volumes of CP/M software from all over the globe. Send A5 SAE for their CP/M catalogue. REF:C

TRADING POST, Victoria Road, SHIFNAL, Shropshire, TF11 8AF (01952 462135) have a variety of unused 8-bit computers available and even complete ones for spares from £10 and hardware

MISCELLANEOUS SMALL ADVERTS - contd

and software for all 8-bits computers.
REF:C

WANTED: Does anyone know of an
Italian spellcheck program or Italian
file for a spell checker? Write to Mr
AJ Howard, 65, Altyre Way, BECKENHAM,
Kent BR3 3ED (and 8BIT) REF:3

OJ SOFTWARE, 273, Mossy Lea Road,
Wrightington, Nr WIGAN, Lancs WN6 9RN
for 8-bit software and 3" discs Tel:
01257 421915 REF:C

WANTED: Bootup software for an
Apricot computer. The machine was made
in 1983, has a start-up test ROM but
needs a 3½" CP/M boot to bring it back
to life. Any data will be useful.
Contact Roger Henson, 88, Falkner
Street, Gloucester, Glos GL1 4SJ. Tel:
01452 303390. REF:3

LATE ENTRIES AND OMISSIONS:

Nope, they're all here.

ALCHEMIST SOFTWARE

For the last 10 issues or so I have
been looking for the space to publish
details of Alchemist Software's many
Spectrum-related activities. At last,
in their own words (slightly edited to
fit the space), here is their story:

"Alchemist Research is the UK's
leading Spectrum and emulator user
group. It was established in 1986 and
is the people's choice for anything
Spectrum, and winner of the Crashed
magazine award for Best Spectrum
Service for 1995-96. We work closely
with the best Spectrum services, who
will confirm our unrivalled service.

"Our magazine AlchNews is now the
world's largest Spectrum tape and disk
magazine. Latest issues have been the
equivalent of 384 pages of solid A4
text! The magazine covers all aspects
of the Spectrum, including regular
sections on: Basic programming, news,
software reviews, PD reviews and
tutorials, adventure writing and
playing, Spectrum emulators, machine
code, languages, +3 computing, +D,
Opus, Microdrive, communications,

fiction stories, humour, the
unexplained, hardware projects, CP/M,
music, adverts and much more.

"AlchNews has dozens of the best
Spectrum writers, many of which are
leading figures in the Spectrum scene.
The magazine also incorporates folded
magazines of the past, including
SARUG, Sinclair News, 1982 and
Marshall Cavendish's INPUT series.

"AlchNews is available on any
Spectrum format (except 3" disk) for
just £1. Subscription fee is £4 per
year. For a free sample of the latest
or any back issues, just send media
and SAE, stating which issues you'd
like. A PKZIPped collection of all
back issues will fit on one HD PC
disk for use with an emulator.

"Alchemist Software is the world's
biggest Spectrum software service,
including Spectrum and CP/M titles.
The library has an archive of over ten
thousand titles and has just about any
kind of program you'd require. The
service has just been transferred to
the address below where the new staff
can offer an even greater service.

Trevor Mossman & Lloyd Garland,
Alchemist Software, 126, Hayward Road,
BRISTOL BS5 9QA

"Alchemist Research also supports
other reputable and respected UK
software services: Fountain PD, Minds
Demo Library, MGPD, and Impact PD and
it has also been granted permission to
re-release the Gremlin Graphics back
catalogue of Spectrum games.

"Alchemist Research is the only
service which operates a Spectrum
helpline, totally devoid of any
subscription or other charges. We aim
to solve any problem you may be
experiencing, be it hardware or
software. Other than INDUG, Alchemist
Research is the only group who
receives official and regular support
on +D bugs and fixer programs. We are
also in close contact with some of the
world's best software programmers.

"We have masterminded several
hardware projects, including 128k
keypad devices, +3 external drives,
RS232 communications and a multi-group

project of 'essential manuals',
beginning with a Spectrum 128k
definitive technical manual. We can
master disk conversions of your
programs, should you not have the
facilities, and aid in any aspect of
your programming. We can help in
tracking down hardware, software and
books, thanks to our register of users
with equipment for sale. We are the
only group to cover Spectrum CP/M in
depth and offer assistance, tips and
programs for users with Star printers.

Alchemist Research, 62, Tithe Barn
Lane, Woodhouse, SHEFFIELD South
Yorkshire S13 7LN. Tel: 0114 269 7644
(Mobile: 0378 835 449) 19:00-22:00
weekdays or 13:00-22:00 weekends"

So there you are; one enormous
plug! If any other computer support
group or PD library would like to
submit a similar personal statement, I
will be pleased to put it in the queue
for space. BW.

BROWN SHORTS

The latest news and information
from Leon Brown, 43, Gwydir Street,
Toxteth LIVERPOOL L8 3TJ: New editions
of Sinclair Computer User and CPC
Format tape 'zines are probably out by
the time you read this. Each costs a
tape plus an SAE and 18p in stamps.

From the same address comes Galaxy
Lottery plus two demos for the
Spectrum. Please send £1.50, an SAE
and a tape.

And there's more... The Eight Bit
Alliance (at the same address)
publishes its monthly newsletter on
tape. If you also want introductory
booklets, free software, etc send 18p
in stamps *as well as* the basic pre-
requisite tape and SAE each month.

As I understand it, CPCs, SAMs and
Spectrums are the only formats
supported by the group. Perhaps I
missed the point last time, but I had
heard that the 8BA was launched as an
alternative to the IEBA - 'all
formats' and all that. Apparently I
was misinformed so sorry if I gave the
wrong impression in previous issues of
8BIT. BW

THE LEGAL STUFF: PLEASE NOTE: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, copyright on all articles in **8BIT** or its predecessor **8BIT Mart**, is held by Brian Watson and/or the relevant author, *but may be freely reproduced elsewhere as long as BIT's name, full address, and phone number are credited as the source.* In fact I am happy to supply copies of any articles on disc, if required, but phone first to ensure we can agree on a disc format which suits both. I understand from a contributor that some of his work has been lifted wholesale from another publication and published elsewhere without acknowledgement. Not fair, not big, not clever.

DISCLAIMER: The contents of **8BIT** are published on the basis that they are opinion or believed true at the time of publication. No liability can be accepted by Brian Watson or other contributors for any loss or damage, however caused. So mind how you go, *I*'m doing my best! I am careful to try to supply a realistic value to any hunch, belief, opinion, rumour or fact but clangers can still happen. So, "Sorry, please tell me if/when it happens so that I can set the record straight."

THE REAL WORLD: The pressures on my time of business, life and deadlines mean individual replies to letters cannot be guaranteed. I'm not (I hope) rude, I'm just a very busy person.

COMING NEXT TIME: After this rather unusual Summer Special, who knows what Issue 14 of 8BIT will bring? Certainly not your editor, who is off to bed in 5 minutes as it is now 6 minutes past 5am. Certainly, all the usual features which I have left out this time will be included as will all the display advertisements, plus information on some new program releases. Copy date is 15th September.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Details of 8BIT subscribers' will not be divulged without their express or strongly implied permission, and *never* for marketing purposes (especially to the person who has sent me three First Issues none of which, as far as I know, got finished or distributed). There are moves afoot by some groups to pool some of their information in the interests of contacting those who are still 8-bit users but may not now be in touch with a user group or other support. 8BIT is participating in the project, but readers' confidentiality will be respected by handling all confidential information 'in house.'

HELP: The advertising pages are the best places for appeals for (or offers of) help, and I assume that the appropriate 'permission to publish' is implied with any letter received unless otherwise stated.

LOW-COST REPAIRS: I have had some responses to the recent request for those able to offer a 'small repairs service' for a fair price. From next issue these will be published in a **Small Works** section of the small ads pages. With the supplies of some older computer equipment (especially peripherals) dwindling, it is unfortunately cheaper to replace the item than have it repaired resulting in the *working* parts of the failed item being lost when it goes in the bin.

There is a golden opportunity for a network of low-cost repairers to do some of the small jobs such as replacing drive belts, fitting replacement drives (keeping the old ones for spares) and mending small faults economically. To minimise postage costs, especially on larger items like monitors and keyboards, I am prepared to offer a free courier service throughout East Anglia and London north of the Thames. For now, there are some offers already distributed through the small adverts sections and in addition, Philip DiRichleau of the CPC user group **WACCI** has volunteered general assistance to find parts, repairers, and help generally. His time is precious so write in the first place to Ground Floor Flat, 121, Ripon Street, LINCOLN, Lincs LN5 7NG.

And just before we close, didn't there used to be a contents listing on the front cover of 8BIT?